

The Musical World.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT.

A RECORD OF MUSIC, THE DRAMA, LITERATURE, FINE ARTS, FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE, &c.

Terms of Subscription, per Annum, 16s. Stamped; 12s. Unstamped; to be forwarded by Money Order or Postage Stamp, to the Publisher, W. S. Johnson, "Nassau Steam Press," 60, St. Martin's Lane, Charing Cross.

No. 44.—Vol. XXIV.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1849.

{ PRICE THREEPENCE.
{ STAMPED FOURPENCE.

EPICRAM FROM THE GREEK OF POSIDIPPUS, OR ASCLEPIADES.

Even the Cupids themselves fix'd eyes on the lovely Irene,
When from the chambers of gold, sacred to Venus, they came;
Then they beheld her a perfect form,—of the finest of marble
She seem'd sculptur'd; she bow'd, pressed by the weight of her charms.
Many a dart, with their infantine hands, these Cupids directed,
Many a dart did they send swift from the purple-strung bow.

J. O.

MACFARREN'S "KING CHARLES II."

THE new comic opera by Mr. Macfarren, of which we have so often spoken in anticipation, was produced on Saturday night, at the Princess's Theatre, with entire success.

It is not necessary to say anything more of the plot than that it is built upon the popular two-act comedy of Howard Payne, which, under the name of *Charles the Second*, made so great a hit at Covent-garden Theatre, nearly a quarter of a century since, and has kept the stage ever since. The task of making the libretto devolved upon Mr. Desmond Ryan, and we are compelled to say, although he be our *collaborateur* in this journal, that he has accomplished it with much ability. He has introduced some modifications in one or two of the characters which have rendered them much better adapted for musical illustration. But of these and of all particulars that call for minute analysis we must refer our readers to another part of our paper, where we have spoken at some length of the music, and adduced extracts from sundry of the journals, and to another occasion, when we purpose to review the opera at length. At present we must confine ourselves to generalities, and speak at length only of the performance, and even of that at no great length.

The music of *King Charles II.* is, in our opinion, the best that Mr. Macfarren has written. The melodies are more varied and plentiful, the design of the concerted pieces larger, their development more masterly, and the general tone of the work more dramatic and effective than in his previous essays. There is also (as in *Don Quixote*, but even still more remarkably), a fine individuality preserved in each of the separate characters, amidst an evident unity of purpose. The style, moreover, is so decided, that not one of the pieces, long or short, but would, by any one acquainted with Mr. Macfarren's manner of writing, be at once laid to his account. In short, *King Charles II.* is as clearly Macfarren, as the *Barber of Seville* is Rossini. It will be rightly inferred from this, that we regard the new opera, not only as a work of very distinguished talent, but as the unquestionable offspring of genius.

The performance, on the whole, was creditable to the theatre. Mr. Maddox had bestowed unusual pains and expense on the stage details, and the scenery and dresses were equally good and appropriate. Mr. Loder, too, had worked with unabating zeal and ability in training the orchestra and chorus, and the result was everything that was practicable

with the resources at his command. The cast included the names of Miss Louisa Pyne, Madame Macfarren, Mrs. Weiss, Messrs. Harrison, Weiss, and H. Corri.

As it was the *début* of Madame Macfarren (who played Julian, the Page,) upon the English stage, we shall speak of her first. We need not recapitulate at length what we have so frequently said of her voice, in speaking of her concert-singing—suffice it that it is a *contralto* of wide compass, considerable power, and no ordinary flexibility. Those qualities of energy and feeling which we have had occasion to remark in her singing, serve Madame Macfarren to much better purpose on the stage. What might occasionally have been rightly judged as over-coloured in the concert-room, on the stage becomes appropriate. The evidence of intelligence and purpose in all she attempts is a great point in her singing, and even excuses partial failure where that occurs. Madame Macfarren is a very young singer, and has many of the faults of young singers, the inevitable result of an over-anxiety to do well. But we are very greatly mistaken if there be not in her the elements of a great dramatic singer, which careful fostering will not be long in bringing out. The occasion of her own *début*, combined with that of her husband's opera, will account for the nervous sensibility that impaired much of what would otherwise have been excellent in Madame Macfarren's performance on Saturday. But we do not advance this as an apology for her performance; it requires none, since her success was unequivocal. The audience received her with the warmest favour and encouraged her by repeated marks of approval. Her first song, a graceful ballad, was given with such exquisite taste as to elicit a spontaneous encore from the whole house. Later, the emphatic and expressive manner in which she delivered a declamatory recitative of considerable length and vocal difficulty, completely established her in the good graces of the connoisseurs. She also sang a cavatina, and a variation in the finale, both in the florid style. In these she did quite enough to prove that she possessed the flexibility of which we have spoken, but when less anxious, and more composed, she will sing them still better. To conclude, we may congratulate the young debutante on her success, which was as well deserved by herself, as it was honestly and genially conferred by the audience.

Miss Louisa Pyne has certainly taken the town by storm. The part of Fanny—her first original one—completed the trio of successes, of which Zerlina and Amina constituted the two first. Miss Louisa Pyne took every pains and made the very best of the music, the audience testifying their satisfaction by encoring her in every one of her (four) songs, and also in her duet with Madame Macfarren. Mr. Weiss, as Captain Copp, was throughout zealous and effective. He, too, obtained an encore in a sea song, called "Nan of Battersea," which he deserved thoroughly. Mr. Harrison was dashing and energetic in the music of *King Charles*, and Mr. Corri did his best, if not the best, for the part of Rochester. The

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orchestra obtained an encore for the overture, and the chorus obtained another for a madrigal, unaccompanied; in neither case was the compliment injudiciously bestowed, whether we consider the high merits of the music or the carefulness of the execution. In all there were nine encores, more than half the pieces in the opera. A more thorough success was never achieved or merited. After each act the principal singers were recalled, and at the end, in obedience to an unanimous summons for the composer, Mr. Macfarren appeared before the curtain, led on by Miss Louisa Pyne, amidst the most enthusiastic cheering. Mr. Loder should have come on with the principal singers; his name was unanimously pronounced, and no one engaged in the opera was better entitled to the compliment. Full and detailed particulars anon.

THE "EUTERPE" OF HERODOTUS.

TRANSLATED, WITH NOTES.

(Continued from page 661.)

LXXXV. THE mourning and burials of the Egyptians are in this wise:—When one of a family dies, who is also a person of some consideration, all the women of the family cover their heads and even their faces with mud. Then, leaving the dead body at home, they go about the city with their bosoms bare, and a girdle about their waists, and smite themselves, and with them are all the females who belong to them. In another part, the men, who are also guarded, smite themselves, and when they have done this, they take the body to be embalmed.

LXXXVI. There are persons to whom this art belongs, and who are devoted to it. These, when the body is brought to them, shew the bearers wooden models of dead bodies, painted after nature. The most excellent model (*a*) is, they say, of one whom it is not fitting to mention on such an occasion (*b*). The second which they shew is inferior, and at a lower price; and the third, cheapest of all. They then ask the bearers, according to which of the three methods they wish the body to be embalmed. The friends, having agreed on a price, depart, and the embalmers, left to themselves, proceed to work as follows, when the best plan is to be adopted:—In the first place, they take out the brain through the nostrils, and put drugs in their place; then cutting open the flank with a sharp Ethiopian stone (*c*), they take out all the entrails. Cleaning out the cavity, they wash it with palm-tree oil, and then pass into it aromatic herbs which have been pounded. Then, having filled the belly with pure myrrh, pounded, and cinnamon, and other aromatic herbs, except pankincense, they sew it up. Having done this, they steep the body in natrum, and thus keep it for seventy days. For a longer time than this they are not allowed to keep it. When the seventy days have passed, they wash the corpse, and wrap it up entirely in strips of byssine (*d*) cloth, smeared with commi, which the Egyptians for the most part use instead of glue. The relatives of the deceased then take the body back, and make for it a case in the form of a man, in which they put it. Locking up this case, they preserve it in a place appropriated for burials, standing it close against the wall. This, then, is the most perfect way of preserving the dead.

LXXXVII. Those who wish to incur a moderate expense, without having recourse to the cheapest plan, do thus:—When they have filled some syringes with an unctuous juice from the cedar, they inject this into the body, without cutting it open, or taking out the intestines. During the days immediately following they steep it in nitre, and on the last of these

days take out the cedar juice which they have before injected, and which is so strong that it dissolves the stomach and the intestines, so that these come out with it. The flesh is consumed by the nitre, and of the whole body nothing is left but the skin and the bones. When they have done this, they return the body without doing anything further.

LXXXVIII. The last method of embalming, which is employed by the poor, is this:—Injecting *syrmæ* (*e*) into the belly, they then keep it steeped for the seventy days, and then give it back.

LXXXIX. The women belonging to men of distinction are not given to the embalmers immediately after their death, neither are those who are remarkably beautiful or in more than ordinary repute, but three or four days are first suffered to elapse * * *

XC. If any one of the Egyptians themselves, or even a foreigner, is found killed by a crocodile, or drowned in the river, the city in which his body is found is obliged to embalm him, and after adorning him in the most magnificent manner, to bury him in the sacred tombs. None of his friends or relations are allowed to touch him, but the priests of the Nile handle the body, and bury it as if it were something more than a human corpse.

NOTES:

(a) Belzoni and Minutoli enumerate five methods, but perhaps the three mentioned here were subdivided. According to Diodorus Siculus, the most expensive way cost an Attic talent (£243 15s.), and the second twenty minæ (£81 5s.)

(b) No doubt a representation of Osiris.

(c) This is supposed to be the same with a sort of stone which Strabo found between Syene and Philæ. Stone knives have been discovered in mummies.

(d) This is generally supposed to be cotton. Commi is gum-arabic.

(e) It is not known what fluid is here intended.

(To be continued.)

SONNET.

NO. CCLVII.

ω δῖος αἰθήρ.

OLD confidant!—thou broad primæval sky!—

How oft has suff'ring man been doom'd to take

His refuge with thee, since thou erst did shake

With echoes of the tortur'd Titan's cry.

Although thy cold blue face is rais'd so high,

We feel 'tis not thy nature to forsake

Thy anxious votaries, but that when they make

Their supplication, thou in soul art nigh.

In soul—thou hast a soul! there's that which saith

That thou art living, that the light's thy smile,

And that thou frownest when dark clouds appear.

Oh, let me still cling to this ancient faith!

If false, it seems true sorrows to beguile,—

All seems not desperate, when thou art clear.

N. D.

LONDON WEDNESDAY CONCERTS.

THE second performance of the present series took place on Wednesday, and was very fully attended. The vocal performers on this occasion were Mrs. A. Newton, the Misses A. and M. Williams, Eyles, O'Connor, Huddart, Rebecca Isaacs, Mr. Lockey, Signor Bartolini, and Herr Formes. The solo instrumentalists were M. Alexandre Billet (piano), Sainton (violin), and the Messrs. Distin (sax horns).

The selection was from *Der Freischütz*. The overture was admirably played, and elicited loud applause. No band could go better, and Herr Anschutz proved himself a thorough general of the baton. Herr Formes sang the scena "Haste, haste! nor loose the favouring hour," with immense vigour,

and was rapturously encored in the famous drinking song. "Life is darkened." Mrs. A. Newton, in the grand and arduous scena, "Softly sighs," proved herself an excellent artist, and a thorough musician in feeling. Her reading of this varied composition displayed considerable taste and judgment, while her execution and her style in general betokened the great progress she has lately made in vocalism. The Bridesmaid's Chorus, most charmingly sung by all the female principals, was encored with acclamations.

M. Alexandre Billett made his first appearance at these concerts, and obtained a warm reception. He is an excellent pianist; sterling rather than showy, although his playing is by no means devoid of brilliancy, nor his mechanical dexterity inconsiderable, as the pieces he chose evidenced, it being none other than Weber's *Concert-Stuck*. M. Billett performed the fantasia in a masterly style, and with a thoroughly musician-like appreciation, which, so far from being lost on the audience, was the cause of very strenuous ebullitions of eulogistic feeling.

Miss Eyles made her first appearance and was encored in Knight's "Pretty Dove."

The Messrs. Distin were received with great favour. They performed a *fantasia* on airs from *Lucia*, and airs sung by Jenny Lind, accompanied on the piano, by Mr. Wilby, jun. They were enthusiastically encored.

The overture to *Egmont*, very finely performed, concluded the first part.

The second part commenced with Bennett's overture to the *Naiades*, one of the most exquisite of fairy overtures. We never heard it with more delight. It was played to admiration.

Miss Huddart, who, by the way, has a fine contralto voice, though it evidently wants cultivation, was encored in a ballad; and Signor Bartolini, the tenor from Her Majesty's Theatre, received the same compliment in the serenade from *Don Pasquale*.

M. Sainton played a fantasia of his own composition with his usual power of tone and fine execution. The fantasia is new, and is adapted to airs from the *Figlia del Reggimento*. It is a composition not only admirably written to display the mechanical dexterities and *cantabile* playing of the performer, but one which must claim notice for skill intrinsically on account of its intention and accomplishment. The fantasia, we are inclined to think, is the best production of the kind which has proceeded from M. Sainton's pen.

Of the remainder of the performances a word must suffice. Herr Formes sang the recitative and air, "O, ruddier than the cherry," with eminent success. The great German basso is making rapid strides in his English pronunciation. He gave the recitative with tremendous effect, and was received at the end of the air with loud cheers. Nothing but the lateness of the hour prevented an encore.

The Distin's gave an instrumental quartet, founded on the *Linda di Chamouni*; and after some minor essays, the entertainment concluded with the overture to *Zampa*.

FANNY KEMBLE AGAIN.—The recent decree, divorcing Mr. and Mrs. Pierce Butler, by the competent Court of Philadelphia, needs some explanation to make it understood. The decree divorces, with full power to each of the parties to marry again; and the reason given for this summary, and to many, unexpected decree, is that no one appeared in opposition to the petition, which was from Mrs. Butler. A correspondent informs us that it was previously arranged between the counsel of the late husband and wife that there should be no opposition, and that the consideration was the settlement of 30,000 dollars on Mrs. Butler, by her late husband; the interest of which alone she may expend annually, and at her death, the principal goes to the two children, to whom alone Mrs. Butler has power to bequeath it.—*New York Express*.

DRAMATIC INTELLIGENCE.

PRINCESS'S.

KING CHARLES THE SECOND.

The triumphant success achieved by Mr. Macfarren's new opera has been chronicled by the whole of the metropolitan press. We have not heard one dissentient voice, nor read one dissentient opinion, as to the merits of *King Charles the Second*. That it is the finest and most complete operative work of a native musician ever produced on the stage is no less universally allowed. The production of such a work and its reception must be regarded as an epoch in the history of the music of the country.

It will be readily granted, that in the instrumentation and vocal scoring of a large and comprehensive work—for such is *King Charles II.*, musically speaking—from the pen of such a musician as Mr. Macfarren, the public expected nothing less than what was unexceptionable; but in the form in which the music would be presented, and, from the classic elevation and high poetic feeling of the author, in the melodies and ideas, there was some fear that simplicity would be overlooked, and that popular taste would not be conciliated. Several of Mr. Macfarren's most ardent admirers shared in this apprehension, and all were most agreeably disappointed. Never was opera written with a more direct intention of courting popular favour, and never was opera more successful in that intention in so short a time.

Mr. Macfarren's greatest, and most simple and unaffected music is comprised in *King Charles II.* The finale to the first act, and the grand sextet and chorus in the second, have been surpassed by no composer. The conception is large and massive, and the development exhibits the skill of a profound and zealous artist. Still more than in a mere musical point of view, are these two master-pieces of writing noticeable. They abound in beauties, the most striking and captivating, and of the most varied kind. The bustle and liveliness of the opening in the finale, are finely contrasted with the Captain's song on his entrance, "Order, order, order in the King's Head!" a magnificent subject in slow time, which will force itself on the dullest ear; while the heartiness and joyous feeling of the toast-song, "Here's to the maid with a love-laughing eye," and the rage and storm involved in the contentions between the sailor, the King, and Rochester, are admirably set off by the suavity and delicacy of the quartet, "Oh! father, prove not so unkind," one of the most exquisite and finely written *morceaux* we ever heard. This contrast is no less happily carried into the sextet.

The simple and unaffected beauties of the opera are superabundant. Julian's first ballad, "She shines before me like a star," most charmingly and gracefully sung by Madame Macfarren, is one of the most delicious songs that can possibly be imagined, and excites immense applause nightly. The duet, "O, blest are young hearts," is still more captivating and more simple. It is sung by Miss Louisa Pyne and Madame Macfarren, and creates a *furor* at every performance. The delightful singing of the fair artists has no doubt something to do with the enthusiasm. This duet cannot fail to become one of the great vocal popularities of the day. The King's song, "Here's to the maid with the love-laughing eye," may also be set down among the simple beauties of the opera. It possesses a bold and dashing tune, which catches the ear instantaneously. Mr. Harrison sings this song with immense spirit. This also must become popular. The sea-song, "Nan of Battersea," is perhaps the best ballad in the opera.

The melody is highly characteristic and sweetly pleasing. If sea-songs have not lost their entire influence, "Nan of Battersea" ought to make the publishers' fortune. It is encored every night, Mr. Weiss rendering it with much expression and feeling. We particularly admire his finishing the last line of the second verse in his *mezza voce* voice. It has a capital effect. The next *morceau* of this class is the King's song in the last scene, "My heart to thee flies home." This song does not appear to have pleased the critics, nor did it take with the audience on the first night, the opposition to the encore being so great as to prevail. It seems, however, to improve with repetition. It is now encored every night. The opening of this song is somewhat common—at least it suggests nothing new, nor is it striking—but it finishes most charmingly, and becomes at last highly effective. Mr. Harrison's singing is here expressive and excellent. Though last, certainly not least, the romance, "A poor simple maiden am I," takes its place in our category. This is an original song in the highest acceptance of the term. Though perfectly "simple," as it should be, it is entirely novel both in construction and treatment, and is decidedly the vocal gem of the work. This exquisite little romance alone of itself would conduce to the success of the opera. We have heard no ballad singing to equal Miss Louisa Pynes in this song—we speak convincingly—since the time of Miss Stephens. The effect produced is something unprecedented. The most rapt and breathless attention is followed nightly by a tumultuous double encore.

There are other vocal solos in the opera which cannot properly be classed with simple songs or ballads. The Queen's first song, "Fare-ye-well, fond hopes," is a cavatina, with a slow and quick movement, and is particularly noticeable for a beautiful bit of chorus which chimes in at the end. Fanny's entrance song, "Hope and Fear alternate vying," may also be termed a cavatina, or a song with a *largo* and *allegro* movement. It is a lovely composition, more especially the first movement, in which the musician cannot fail to remark some exquisite points in the instrumentation. Miss Louisa Pyne sings this song with the purest style and the most unexceptionable taste. The florid passages in the last movement are warbled with bird-like ease and facility. Still more charming is Miss Louisa Pyne's second song, "Canst thou deem my heart is changing?"—a song infused with the very spirit of Mozart, and which will, doubtless, become the prime favourite of the opera with all musicians and such as love the elevated and poetical in vocal music. For our own parts, we prefer nothing in the whole opera to this most beautiful and intensely passionate heart-appeal, and consider it one of the sweetest and most perfect vocal gems that have been written for the last twenty years. Nothing can be more pure and truly delightful than Miss Louisa Pyne's rendering of this song, in which she is nightly encored. Julian's cavatina in the second act, "There was ne'er known a contrivance," is full of vivacity and point. It is a kind of "brindisi" written something after the fashion of Alboni's song in *Lucrezia Borgia*, not servilely, nor even after the manner of a copy, but with the same intention. Mr. Macfarren's cavatina is, however, infinitely more difficult than Donizetti's "brindisi," and we can hardly fancy a more arduous task for any voice than to accomplish this same cavatina of Julian. As a composition, the song is full of interest, and the melody is among the most striking in the opera; but we fancy the florid passages at the end, comprising chromatic scales and arpeggios embracing two octaves or more, introduced, we opine, to exhibit Madame Macfarren's great extent and flexibility of voice, tend in a great measure

to dissipate the effect. Madame Macfarren displays very unusual flexibility, and a great command of voice in this cavatina, but we are sure the effect she produces would be greatly enhanced by the omission of the passages alluded to, which seem to come in obtrusively where the melody should naturally close. It is a pity that anything should militate against Madame Macfarren's really fine singing.

Having so far generalized, we shall now present our readers with extracts from several of the leading journals, in which all particulars of the first performance will be found, leaving us to wind up with a few remarks on the performance and sundry matters connected therewith. The subject is an all-important one, and if our columns appear to be over-crowded by one operatic article, it will be borne in mind that the subject of that article has been pronounced by the leading journal of the day as "likely to constitute a new era in the history of art." But, independent of all other considerations, we have no doubt that the various opinions of the leading critics, in conjunction with our own, will prove in no small degree acceptable to our subscribers.

KING CHARLES THE SECOND.

(From the Times.)

ON Saturday evening, a new comic opera, in two acts, the music by Mr. Macfarren, was produced with complete and deserved success. The name of the opera is *King Charles II.*, and the libretto is, for the most part, a lyrical version of Howard Payne's well known comedietta, which was produced at Covent Garden, under the memorable direction of Mr. Charles Kemble, and has retained its popularity for nearly a quarter of a century. The plot is so familiar to the theatrical public as to obviate the necessity of a detailed account. Every one must remember the jealousy of Queen Kate, whose *amour propre* is outraged by the endless *amourettes* of the "Merry Monarch;" her complaint to Rochester, who engages to aid her in accomplishing the King's reform; the adventure at Wapping, where the Royal profligate, in disguise, accompanied by his favourite courtier, enters into the sports and festivities of his sailor subjects; the instant captivation of his sickle heart by the pretty daughter of "mine host of the King's Head," to whom the Queen's favourite page is paying his addresses under the assumed profession of a music-master; the tender of the Royal watch and seals for the unpaid tavern bill, which results in the King's committal to prison; the decampment of Rochester, who has got him into the scrape; the King's recognition by the Page, who, conjointly with the landlord's daughter, contrives to escape through the window; and, ultimately, his re-appearance at Court, where, to cover his own delinquencies, he pardons everybody, even the perfidious Rochester, and professes a repentance, which may be supposed to be sincere—at least, until the curtain drops, and leaves some other dramatist the choice of similar adventures, in which King Charles was subsequently concerned, to point a moral and amuse an audience. These are the main incidents of the opera as of the comedietta, and Mr. Desmond Ryan, in the construction of his libretto, has departed but slightly from the conduct and development of the original. The only material difference is in the character of the Page, whom, in order to allow the composer a better opportunity of varying the character of his music, Mr. Ryan has presented rather as a sentimental lover than an inconsiderate care-nothing rake, like Queens' pages in general—if history and romance may be trusted. This change was judicious, and has been carefully worked out. The best points in the drama have been cleverly turned to the account of musical effect, and the songs and verses in general, are much above the ordinary standard, besides possessing the desirable quality of being easily understood. Mr. Howard Payne's comedietta was made the subject of a ballet of action at the Académie Royale de Musique, in Paris, about four years ago, which was successfully produced by Mr. Bunn, at Drury Lane Theatre, under the name of *Betty*, for the *début* of Mdlle. Sophio Fuoco; but the present, we believe, is the first time it has been employed as the libretto of an opera, notwithstanding its evident fitness for musical purposes.

Perhaps, of all our native musicians, Mr. Macfarren is the one who has the most highly and variously distinguished himself. Educated in the Royal Academy of Music, where he studied composition, at different periods, under the late Dr. Crotch, Mr. Lucas, and lastly, Mr. Cipriani Potter, now Principal, he rapidly acquired all the honours conferred upon students in that institution, where he was subsequently appointed one of the chief professors of harmony and composition. His *début* before the public, however, was in 1834, at the inauguration concert of the Society of British Musicians, which took place in the Hanover Square Rooms. On this occasion, the first piece executed was a symphony in F minor, by our composer, then a mere boy, which, admirably performed by a numerous and powerful orchestra, made such an impression as is even now remembered by those who regret that the promise held out of a prosperous and useful career for the Society of British Musicians, has been frustrated by circumstances which a little wisdom might so easily have foreseen and vanquished. Since then, Mr. Macfarren has written several orchestral symphonies and concert overtures, quartets, quintets, and trios, and other musical works for the chamber, sonatas for the pianoforte, &c.; and, in short, has essayed his talents in all the highest departments of instrumental composition. But works of this class find little patronage at home, and their scanty and uncertain sale does not encourage publishers to speculate. Although appreciated and admired by all competent judges, and although some of them have been played at the celebrated *Gewand-haus* concerts at Leipzig under Mendelssohn's direction, and in other of the great musical towns of Germany, the composition of symphonies and overtures in this country is productive of little else than honour to a musician, and living upon honour is somewhat analogous to living upon air. This will account for the large number of miscellaneous vocal compositions which Mr. Macfarren, like Mr. Barnett, Mr. Loder, and other of his compatriots, have been compelled to write, in order to be able to live. Many of our most popular concert-ballads, duets, trios, &c., are from his pen, and as a favourable example of the most popular of them, we may mention the duet, for female voices, "Two merry Gipsies," which, through the singing of the Misses Williams, obtained such universal favour. But, in addition to these, Mr. Macfarren has produced many vocal compositions of a much higher character, such as his illustrations of Schiller, Heine, Rückert, and other German poets, in the *British Vocal Album*, his songs from Mr. Lane's translation of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, his settings of some of the lyrics of Shelley, &c. Besides the music to several short dramatic pieces, Mr. Macfarren has given three complete operas to the public. The first, the *Devil's Opera*, was brought out at the Lyceum Theatre during the last period of Mr. Arnold's management, and by its success was mainly incidental, at this time, in preventing the doors of that establishment from closing. His second, *Don Quixote*, was produced at Drury Lane Theatre, under the direction of Mr. Bunn, in 1846, shortly after Wallace's *Maritana*; it ran nine nights, and was then abandoned. The *Devil's Opera* is a very clever but unequal work; it offers indications of strong dramatic feeling, and the orchestral accompaniments are frequently remarkable for richness and variety; but although some of the pieces, and especially the overture, the introduction, and the trio for female voices, "Good Night," are likely to endure, the want of sustained power and evident indecision of style must not be overlooked. In the *Don Quixote*, which we cannot but regard as one of the best of modern comic operas, the composer's style is completely formed; the power of development becomes equal to the readiness of invention, and there is scarcely one piece in the opera which we would desire to see curtailed or omitted as a weakness or redundancy. Almost as great an advantage upon *Don Quixote*, as that upon its predecessor, *King Charles II.* is not only the most able, original, and complete dramatic work of its author, but one of which no composer, however great and well deserved his reputation, need have been ashamed. Its success on Saturday night can hardly fail to constitute an era in the progress of English dramatic music, and is likely, not merely to benefit the prospects of Mr. Maddox's theatre, but to give a new and powerful impetus to the hopes and exertions of our own musicians.

One hearing of an opera of such pretensions and importance—for *King Charles II.* is composed after the most ambitious existing

models, and contains some of the longest and most elaborate pieces of concerted music that are to be found in any opera of the modern school—is palpably insufficient to authorise us in attempting a minute examination of its various parts; we shall, therefore, be content to offer some general observations, and briefly signalize the most striking *morceaux*. The overture, in C major, is brilliant and effective; the outline, clear and simple, is filled up by an abundance of ingenious details, showing the thorough master of orchestral combinations; its prevalent character is that of exuberant gaiety, but this is relieved by the introduction of a plaintive melody for the second theme, which is given to the violoncellos, and forms an agreeable under-current of sentiment. It is an appropriate prelude to the opera, of which, as an overture properly should do, it succinctly illustrates the most striking characteristics. The introduction is a *morceau* of considerable length; a chorus of ladies of honour in G leads to a short solo for Julian, the Page, and is then resumed; a cavatina for the Queen, consisting of a *larghetto* in E minor, and a *cabaletta* in the major follow; part of the chorus is then repeated, and concludes the introduction. The chorus is smooth and melodious, and the accompaniment of which the prominent feature is a graceful running passage for the violins, *staccato*, sparkling and pretty; the Queen's song, "Fare ye well," is extremely vocal, and the neatness of the plan sustains the general interest of the *morceau*, which would, nevertheless, we think, bear some slight curtailment. The King's first air, "Hail, all hail, to pleasure," in C, is a bravura song full of fire and animation; the music is strikingly illustrative of the sentiment of the words, which embody an invocation to pleasure; but a tenor voice of unusual force and flexibility is demanded to give due effect to its florid character, and to make head against the elaborate instrumentation that accompanies it. A duettino for the King and Queen, in A flat, "Fear no sorrow," is melodious, but not remarkably original; in the accompaniment the violins are muted with good effect. An air for Julian, in E flat, "She shines before me like a star," may be presented as the model of what a ballad ought to be; the melody (the second theme of the overture, alluded to above), is genial and expressive, and the accompaniments, in the midst of their unobtrusive simplicity, bear every sign of the care that has been bestowed upon them. The duet for the King and Rochester, in the same key, where Rochester tempts his Royal master to visit the "King's Head," at Wapping, by a description of the beauty of the landlord's daughter, Fanny, is long and discursive; it contains a bass solo for Rochester, which is thrice repeated in different keys, and a *cabaletta* at the end in the original mode; the dramatic interest is cleverly sustained, and the *cabaletta*, "What joy divine," lively and effective; here again, however, we should not object to a trifling curtailment, if the words and situation could be accommodated. The second scene begins with a cavatina in F for soprano (Fanny), consisting of a slow movement and *cabaletta*: both are well written, especially the latter, which is bravura throughout, and demands both volume of tone and neatness of articulation to produce the intended effect. After a good deal of accompanied recitative occurs a duettino in A flat, for Fanny and Julian, "Oh blest are young hearts," which is one of the gems of the opera; the theme, given to these two voices in thirds and sixths, is catching and new, and the expression of the words, "Like flowers sweetly springing," in the second part, exceedingly beautiful; the accompaniment, in which the violoncellos are employed on arpeggios, pizzicato, joined at the end by the flutes, clarionets, and bassoons, which enrich the harmony of the voices, is also remarkably fresh and spontaneous. The remainder of Act I. is entirely devoted to the finale, perhaps the longest ever written. To be the longest finale ever written, however, would indicate nothing more than a certain ingenuity of development and a ready use of vocal and instrumental combinations on the part of the composer; but Mr. Macfarren's finale has another and a much higher kind of merit; it illustrated, with great dramatic truth and a powerful variety of contrast, the whole business of the scene in which the King and Rochester, in disguise, join the festivities of the sailors at Wapping, ending with the committal of the former to prison, for having stolen the Royal watch and seals; upon which the curtain falls. The several characters of Fanny, Julian, Captain Copp, Rochester, and the King, while separately sustained with striking individuality, are combined with admirable unity of effect. The old English style of melody, is

with great skill, made to colour the whole, which, by the way, ought to be specially mentioned, lest what is evidently intentional and artistically correct, should, by superficial observers, be cited as a want of originality.

With the second act we are compelled to be much more brief. Indeed we can only name some of the pieces that most struck us. Captain Copp's ballad, "Nan of Battersea," is likely to become popular; it is, both in melody and feeling, a bit of genuine Dibdin. Fanny's cavatina, "Canst thou deem my heart is changing?" is the best song in the opera, whether we regard the expressive beauty of the melody, or the exquisite finish of the accompaniments. A long dramatic trio in G for Fanny, Julian, and the King, in which Fanny and the Page contrive the escape of the Royal offender from his prison in the King's Head tavern, besides its dramatic character and skilful conduct, contains some points of purely musical interest, as the best of which we may mention the canon in D for three voices, "Oh, repentance," a specimen of the purest vocal part-writing. The duettino in F for Rochester and the Queen, "Hope on earth is life's best blessing," though not without considerable merit, might be omitted with advantage, being of no great importance to the progress of the action. A florid cavatina for Julian, in A flat, "There was ne'er known a contrivance," is a very happy piece of descriptive music; Julian describes the escape of the King from the King's Head, and each verse of the song is accompanied and followed by ejaculations of curiosity and surprise from Rochester and the Queen; this is a bravura song, and one of more than ordinary difficulty, but the vocal elaborations are happily made subservient to musical and dramatic effect. The last scene contains a pretty ballad for the King, "Tho' o'er life's pleasures roving," and two of the most admirable pieces in the opera, a madrigal in A, "Maidens would ye 'scape undoing?" and a sestet and chorus in F, "See where they come." The madrigal, sung without accompaniments, by the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, headed by the King, the Queen, and Rochester, combines the quaint style and boldness of progression that belong to Wilbye, Festa, and the best madrigalian composers, with a purity of harmony which those fine old masters were wont to disdain, or with which, perhaps, they were unacquainted. Among the many fine points in which it abounds, we would cite a beautiful piece of "word painting" that occurs on the passage beginning, "Now in solitude she pineth." This madrigal cannot fail to become universally popular. The sestet, in length and importance, and in variety of dramatic effect, only yields to the first finale; the action embodied in the music is the appearance at Court of Captain Copp and his daughter, with the king's watch, the recognition by the king, the confusion and discomfiture of the "Merry Monarch," the denouement of the plot, and the subsequent reconciliation of all parties. The whole conduct of this, in the music, is worthy of admiration. A happy relief to the serious and highly dramatic character of the rest is afforded by a charming romance for Fanny, "A poor simple maiden am I," in which the young maiden artlessly makes her appeal to the King's grace. On the whole this sestet may be pronounced the most perfect *morceau* in the opera, to be preferred even to the finale of the first act, since there is not a single passage which can be cited as superfluous, as hurtful to the unity of the whole, or as weakening or suspending the dramatic interest. A short rondo and chorus in C, "Now, with fears no more contending," the theme of which is first given *ensemble* by Fanny and Julian, to each of whom is afterwards allotted a florid variation, the chorus suspending at the end of each couplet, terminates the opera with brilliant effect.

The general execution of *Charles II.* was honourable to all concerned. Miss Pyne, who undertook the part of Fanny, more than confirmed the favourable accounts that have been given of her recent performances, and the *début* of Madame Macfarren, the wife of the composer, as Julian the Page, was naturally an event of general interest. This young lady has hitherto been known in England as a concert singer, but we believe she has appeared upon the stage in several cities of the United States. Her voice is a contralto of considerable compass; the higher notes, though not strong, are sweet; the middle notes, round and agreeable; and the lower ones, while not so sweet and pure as the middle, are nevertheless strong and resonant. In her singing she combines great earnestness and dramatic feel-

ing with more than ordinary flexibility. She is, perhaps, too much addicted to display the different registers of her voice by immediate contrast, and occasionally employs the lower tones as though with the express purpose of proving that she possessed them. But such faults in young singers mostly arise from a pardonable motive—excess of zeal and anxiety to do all that may be done, which sometimes lead them to do too much, and seldom fail to yield to time and experience. Madame Macfarren's most successful vocal efforts were in the ballad, "She shines before me like a star," which she sang with perfect taste, receiving an unanimous encore, and the accompanied recitative, "O cruel fortune," in the second act, really an admirable piece of vocal declamation, the words being as clearly enunciated as the music was emphatically expressed. In the elaborate descriptive song, "There was ne'er known a contrivance," and the variation for Julian, in the *rondo finale*, Madame Macfarren gave more than sufficient evidence of vocal flexibility. Her reception by the audience was of the most encouraging kind, and can hardly fail to urge her on to renewed exertions. Mr. Harrison was the King Charles, and sang the music of that part with his usual energy.

The getting up of the opera is highly creditable to the theatre. Mr. Maddox has bestowed every pains on the scenery and costumes, which are new, appropriate, and effective. The scene at Wapping, with the arrival of the ship, and the May-pole dance, was beautiful in itself, and admirably managed. The May-pole business is due to Mr. Flexmore, who danced the hornpipe with Madlle. Auriol. At the end of each act all the principal singers were obliged to appear before the curtain, and at the conclusion a loud and unanimous call being raised for the composer, Mr. Macfarren appeared, led on by Miss Pyne, amidst enthusiastic cheering from every part of a house crowded to the ceiling. Previous to Mr. Macfarren's appearance, Mr. H. Corri came on and announced that, in consequence of the approval bestowed upon it by the audience, the opera of *Charles II.* would be repeated every evening until further notice, which announcement was received with a loud burst of applause.

(From the Daily News.)

Macfarren's new opera, *King Charles II.*, was produced on Saturday evening, with an *éclat* which even transcended the most sanguine expectations raised by the known talents of the composer, and by the striking improvement which has been apparent this season in the management of this theatre, as an English opera house. The evening, indeed, was a triumph for English art, whether we regard the high character of the work itself, or the manner in which it was got up and performed.

The libretto is an excellent operatic version, by Mr. Desmond Ryan, of a comic drama called the *Merry Monarch*, which became very popular, not only from the lively and amusing character of the piece itself, but from Charles Kemble's acting in the part of King Charles. The opera adheres closely to the plot and incidents of the original drama. Without, therefore, entering into details, we may mention that the subject is what may be called a "lark" of the merry monarch and his favourite the Earl of Rochester, who, disguised as sailors, pay a visit to Wapping, and mingle in the festivities of the "natives," and get into a quarrel with men by being too free and easy with the damsels. Rochester leaves his master in the lurch, and the King, who has been liberal in treating his new boon-companions, finds himself without money to pay the reckoning. Offering his watch in pledge, it is discovered to bear the royal arms, and the unfortunate possessor, suspected of having stolen it, is seized and consigned to durance vile, from which he escapes by jumping out of a window, and finds his way back to Whitehall. The King is led into this escapade by his friend Rochester, with the Queen's privy, for the not very intelligible purpose of giving his Majesty a moral lesson on the subject of his infidelities and his neglect of his royal consort.

This slight allusion to the subject of the piece may serve to make our remarks on its musical treatment intelligible. The overture is excellent—in the compact, symmetrical form of the classical masters of the German school, and in keeping with the subject. It is a movement in common time, with an unbroken succession of rapid triplets, which gave it an animated and impetuous character; but a charming effect is produced by superinducing on these triplets (which serve as its accompaniment) a beautiful and expressive

melody, afterwards sung by the Page. The drama opens with the forlorn Queen in her boudoir, and surrounded by her maidens, who entertain her with a smooth and pretty chorus. Her Majesty then bemoans her sad lot in a long air, which, though good, is somewhat lugubrious, and demands better singing than Mrs. Weiss's to make it effective. The King makes his *entrée* with another very long air about "kisses and blisses," which is also good music, but has no dramatic effect; and the same remark may be applied to the subsequent duet between the King and the Queen. The part of the poor Queen, like that of the poor Countess in *Figaro*, is dramatically a very heavy one; and Mr. Macfarren, with all his talent, has not been able to lighten the one as Mozart has lightened the other. It was not till the Page Julian made his appearance, in the person of Madame Macfarren, and sang the delicious ballad "She shines before me like a star," that the audience seemed awakened to attention and interest. This lady, though already favourably known as a concert singer, now made her first appearance on the stage. In her exquisitely tasteful costume she looked like a figure in a picture of Vandyke, and her whole personation of the character was marked with grace and feeling. She was, of course, timid and constrained, but this modesty always gives, in our eyes at least, additional interest to a young *debutante*. Her rich *contralto* voice, and her simple expressive style, were shown to much advantage in this beautiful air, which was encored with acclamation. The duet between the King and Rochester, in which the favourite persuades the King to go and see the Maid of Wapping, is in the lively *parlante* style of the Italian stage.

Then came the adventures at Wapping. The scene, by the way, is beautiful, exhibiting the broad Thames, the shipping, and the distant country. Miss Louisa Pyne, as Fanny Copp, sings a little ballad, "Hope and fear alternate vieing," in a light and florid style, which she executed with her usual facility and neatness. Her lover enters, and the duettino, "Oh blest are young hearts," is one of the gems of the opera—indeed, we hardly know a fairer gem in any opera. The tender sweetness of the vocal parts, sustained by the light *pizzicato* of the stringed instruments, is really enchanting. The sports of the sailors and country people form a ballet, not of the fashion of the Italian stage, but full of life and gaiety. The morris dance round the Maypole, accompanied by music redolent of England in the seventeenth century, was picturesque and animated in the highest degree. The entrance of the disguised king and favourite—the joviality, quarrels, and confusion to which their arrival gives rise—are worked into a finale of concerted pieces and chorus which closes the first act with the utmost brilliancy.

The second act opens with a nautical ballad, sung by Captain Copp (Mr. Weiss), "The ship in which poor Tom was moored." It is introduced *à propos de rien*, as such things are too often introduced in English operas; and Mr. Macfarren, in writing it, felt, no doubt, that he was yielding to necessity. The words are *à la Dibdin*; and so, consequently, is the air; but it is good of its kind, and was well sung, so it deserved its encore. A pretty scene follows, in which Fanny, by her sweetness, appeases the jealous umbrage of her lover, Julian. This jealousy is well expressed by an impassioned recitative, admirably delivered by Madame Macfarren; and Fanny's air, "Canst thou deem my heart is changing?" is one of the tenderest little things that can be imagined. The scene reminded us of Zerlina and Masetto—not in the music, but in the effect produced by it. Passing over many beauties which we have not room to notice, we must come to the last scene, which is a brilliant representation of the King and his Court assembled in the banquetting chamber at Whitehall. In conformity with the usage of that day, the company entertain themselves by singing a madrigal; and the madrigal produced by Macfarren, "Maidens, would ye 'scape undoing," is worthy of a place beside the finest madrigals of Wilbye and the other worthies of the Elizabethan age. It was sung by a numerous chorus, with no fault but the slight depression of pitch which is almost unavoidable in unaccompanied vocal music, and with an effect which produced exclamations of pleasure from all parts of the house. The appearance of honest Captain Copp and his pretty daughter in the midst of this brilliant assembly—the recognitions, embarrassments, and *eclaircissements* which ensue, form an animated scene, and afford room for some very dramatic music. Among other things, a romance sung by Miss Louisa Pyne, "A poor simple maiden am I," was found so

delightful, that after it had been once encored with the utmost vehemence, it was very nearly encored a second time. The finale, "Now with fears no more contending," consisting of solos by Madame Macfarren and Miss Pyne, with a chorus, was sung a second time; the curtain, after it had fallen, being raised for that purpose.

What has been said leaves little to be added with respect to the merits of the different performers. Mr. Harrison's personation of the royal libertine was free and manly, and we never heard him sing better. Mr. Macfarren's instrumentation (like Mozart's) gave no opening for the embellishments to which he is so prone, and he did nothing to offend the purest taste. Miss Louisa Pyne has added a fresh wreath to her laurels; and Madame Macfarren's *début* has at once placed her high in public favour. Mrs. Weiss had an ungrateful part in the Queen, but she exerted herself to do her justice. Mr. Weiss sang well, and acted respectably as Captain Copp; and Mr. Corry was a tolerable Rochester, though much of the music was quite beyond his reach.

The success of the opera was triumphant. The composer, as well as the principal performers, was called for, and it was announced that the piece would be performed every night till further notice.

(From the Morning Post.)

The composer of the new opera is George A. Macfarren, whose musical works have worthily placed him in the foremost rank among the musical celebrities of the Continent. There were sufficient indications in his first work, *The Devil's Opera*, to foster the hope of future greatness; his *Don Quixote* manifested a higher knowledge and a fuller experience; and in the opera performed for the first time on Saturday we have the matured efforts of the gifted composer, the dramatic inspiration, the varied knowledge, and the ripper judgment. In this his latest work all the loftier exigencies of the lyrical drama are affluently provided—there are unity of design, harmony of form, closeness of construction, clearness of combination, originality of thought, freshness of melody, brightness of fancy, and brilliancy of orchestration. There is neither patchwork, nor trite tunes, nor vulgar effects to seize upon the merely sensuous listener, nor ultra beating of drums, nor braying of trombones, to rouse up the sluggish attention of the musicmonger. There is not a phrase that fails to do its true office, nor a single bar that does not minister to and assist the lyrical and dramatic development of the story. It is beyond all comparison the noblest English operatic effort of the last twenty years, and we know of no composition of the present time that has even distantly approached its excellence. It is an opera full of beauty and fancy, and each of the personages is musically individualised with a deep and searching knowledge of the springs of action—they utter their thoughts, and express their emotions of tenderness, joy, and passion, in strains of melody the truthfulness of which appeals to the ear, heart, and understanding, and by a spell evokes sympathies and carries them chained to the composer's will to the close of the drama. George Macfarren has been fortunate in his librettist, Mr. Desmond Ryan, who, though founding the opera on the well-known comedy of *Charles II.*, has, in the laying out of the scenes, in the dramatic arrangements, and in the distribution of the concerted pieces and choral necessities, done his task with poetical feeling and dramatic cleverness. The interpretation, as may be inferred from our foregoing remarks, is masterly; and although the finale to the first act is the longest we remember, so varied and yet so consistent—so apposite is the musical expression, and so graceful the melody—so admirable the vocal distribution of parts, and so striking the *ensemble*, that in lieu of the accustomed weariness and *ennui* generated in similar instances, the attention was unflagged and the delight unabated until the fall of the curtain.

The plot is nearly identical with the original drama, with the single exception of changing the character Lady Clara to that of the Queen. This is a decided improvement, for with the former no interest was felt, while the introduction of the latter forms a prominent link in the dramatic chain.

Madame Macfarren, who made her *début*, was completely successful. Her voice is rich in quality, and is regulated by a true artistic spirit. Those who had previously seen this lady in the concert room were positively astonished at the power and beauty of her organ. Her

face beams with intelligence, and her figure is beautifully formed. Her action is free, graceful, and unembarrassed; and her dramatic feeling seems to be innate, for we have seldom witnessed a more impassioned or more truthful embodiment of character. She will prove a valuable addition to the operatic stage, of which we have no doubt she will become a brilliant ornament. She was deservedly applauded, and bouqueted and summoned forth at the termination of the opera; a similar honour was conferred upon Miss Pyne and the chief vocalists.

Miss Pyne, as Fanny, set the seal on her growing fame. She sang throughout beautifully, and acted with great truth and simplicity.

Mr. Harrison, Mr. Weiss, Mrs. Weiss, and Mr. Corri laboured with more or less zeal to secure the success of the opera. Mr. George Macfarren was called for amidst the cheers of the audience.

The opera has been admirably put upon the stage—the scenery, dresses, and grouping are in all respects excellent.

The opera was announced for repetition for every evening till further notice.

(From the Morning Herald.)

Mr. Macfarren's new opera, *King Charles the Second* was brought out at this theatre on Saturday night, and with all the success that it deserved—consequently with no little. Few events have recently created in the musical circles a more remarkable sensation than the contemplated production of another work by the gifted author of the charming operetta *Don Quixote*, and it was not surprising that the attendance of professional visitors, in addition to a large body of the public, should be unusually numerous. Mr. Macfarren well deserved this, for the eminence that he enjoys has been gained by the demonstration of legitimate ability—in no degree by the pretences of the charlatan. His repute in Germany probably exceeds that which he has here. But this only refers to the public at large. Our native musicians are keenly alive to his worth, and uphold his fame with all the zeal of sincerity.

The composer has evidently aimed at giving his music character and purpose; and we do not remember any previous work more strictly appropriate, both in vein and feeling. A popular tone has of course been observed, and hence the opera is likely to find permanent favour with the public at large, who are seldom inaccessible to the influence of simple and unaffected melody, however much they may be deficient in the higher orders of appreciation and judgment. Mr. Macfarren has endeavoured to imbue several of the airs with a purely English sentiment, and some very successful imitations of the old style of invention and harmonising are introduced with great felicitousness. At the same time the fullest dramatic propriety has been maintained, and the music allotted to the King, to the Page, and, in fact, to all, exhibits in each case a perfect and symmetrical suitableness, whether it be roistering and thoughtless merriment, or the disconsolate anxieties of jealous love. The opera is studded with gems, and the music-sellers will, we apprehend, soon be able to determine the value of three or four of the separate *morceaux* in more senses than one. Although the composer has thus appealed to the taste of a general audience, let it not be understood that it has been by the mere display of fluent and airy lightness. On the contrary, the structure of the concerted pieces demonstrates all the ingenuity, colour, and perception of artistic effect for which he is so justly celebrated.

Among the most charming of the songs, are the three ballads sung by Fanny, the daughter of the unsophisticated Copp—the first in F, "Hope and Fear alternate vicing," an andante movement of great beauty, with a florid cabaletta pleasingly descriptive of the anticipations of love; the second in E, "Canst thou deem my heart is changing?" which, for delicacy of treatment, may take rank with either of Cherubino's songs; and the third in A, "A poor simple maiden am I,"—the artless appeal of the simple girl when surrounded by the dazzling splendours of the court. A cavatina of more elaborate texture, in E minor, devolves upon the Queen in the first scene—a larghetto movement, rather drily conceived, but earnest and thoughtful. Upon the contralto representative of the Page, is imposed an air in E flat, "She shines before me like a star," which has been foreshadowed in the

overture—one of the most delicious effusions of amorous tenderness that we have ever met with; and an eager cavatina in A flat, "There ne'er was a contrivance," intermixed with short interrogatories by the Queen and Rochester, which exhibits some quaint scale passages, somewhat fantastically outlined, but strikingly original and ear-bruising. The "Merry Monarch" has three songs—one in C, bravura apostrophe to "Pleasure, pomp, and power," somewhat overlaid with accompaniments; another, also in C, an Anacreontic address to "The maid with the love-laughing eye," occurring in the finale of the first act; and a third, in B flat, "My heart to thee flies home," wherein the wants of the publisher have been mainly consulted—this being a ballad of intensely Balfish spirit. A sea song, called "Nan of Battersea," for the bass tones of Captain Copp, written after the manner of Dibdin, is also another of the more popular tributes. A lovely duet, in A flat, for tenor and soprano voices, "Look but sorrow in the face," and another in the same key, "O blest are young hearts," for soprano and contralto, ornament the first act; the second an exquisite specimen of sprightly and confiding gaiety, and among the brightest gems of the opera. There is likewise a capital dramatic duet, sung by the King and Rochester, in E flat, involving a solo for the latter in B flat, and a vivacious cabaletta, which is flowing and effective. The trio in G, in the second act, "My pretty maid, if thou'lt assist me," occurs in one of the scenes which has received its chief impulse from Mozart. It is admirably worked up for the voices, and throughout highly picturesque. It leads to a canon in D, and a presto in B flat, and a vigorous cabaletta in G—altogether an adroit and vivid illustration of the perplexity of the King, and his escape through the window of the tavern, unfolding a series of well-imagined and well-constructed contrasts. The madrigal sung by the courtiers in the banquetting hall bears, in the qualities of harmonic suspension and masculine quaintness and breadth of effect, the happiest similitude to the antique legacies of the Elizabethan period, and, as such, merits the highest praise. The two finales, taken as wholes, are *chefs d'œuvre* of their class, and, as dramatic ensembles, cannot be surpassed. Large and various in design, the busy motion of the jovialities at Wapping, with the rough indignation of the crowd at the gallantries and the evasions of the disguised King, are most ably and characteristically expressed at the close of the first act. The overture, the principal themes of which are found in the Page's songs, is brilliantly and closely worked. There is also a slow instrumental movement between the acts, the stealing beauty of which, enriched, as it is, by a delicate obligato for the oboe, is very soothing and enchanting.

The honours of the evening were, beyond all shadow of doubt, won by Miss Louisa Pyne, who has more than redeemed the promises of her *début*, and is on the high road to renown as an operatic singer. Nothing could be more ravishingly beautiful than her execution of the music which belongs to the part of the tavern-keeper's daughter. We can desire no greater perfection of facility, style, or finish. Her voice has all the best attributes of youth, and while being of the sweetest and most tuneable quality, is deliciously clear and fresh; and not a note is emitted that is corrupted by a false and uncertain intonation. She enunciates, too, admirably. We have never, in short, encountered an operatic debutante so hopelessly meritorious as this young lady, and Mr. Macfarren has been fortunate in having her as the exponent of some of the choicest airs which his opera contains. There is a simplicity and elegance in her manner eminently engaging; and the three ballads which fell into her hands were rendered with a sweetness and taste that at once challenged admiration and brought down a succession of encores, the genuineness of which was indisputable. The showier characteristics of the finale displayed her powers of vocalisation more prominently than anything that had gone before; and the brilliancy with which she developed a circle of somewhat immelodious divisions, and the sureness with which she sustained a close and perfectly-formed shake at the top of her register, threw the audience into raptures of delight, and her triumph was complete. Miss Pyne has no great pretensions as an actress, but her deportment is both modest and unassuming. Madame Macfarren was the representative of the Page. This lady has for a year or two past been often heard in the concert-room, and the specialities of her style are therefore well known. The finely-conceived recitative which occurs early in the second act could not have been given with

more energy or with better traits of meaning. Her delivery of the ballad "She shines before me" was tasteful and expressive, and she was rewarded with an encore—a compliment that was also bestowed upon her in the descriptive scena in the second act. The applause that Madame Macfarren received was encouraging to a new and untried artiste, and by no means unreservedly awarded. Mr. Harrison played the King, and sang in his usual manner, though not with his usual effect, for, with the exception of the ballad in the last scene, the music generally was not of the class in which he is most at home. He was encored, however, in the song tributary to the beauty of the girls of Wapping, after a fierce contention between the pit and gallery. Mr. Weiss was painstaking as Captain Copp, and his "Nau of Battersea" met with a vigorous fiat of repetition. Mrs. Weiss was the Queen, and acquitted herself creditably. The *mise en scene* is liberal; and the dance about the ribanded mast is as gay as it is exhilarating.

The principal singers came before the curtain at the termination of the opera under circumstances of *éclat* which could not be exceeded. Bouquets were thrown and appropriated by Miss Pyne and Madame Macfarren; and calls were then made for the composer, who was presently led across the stage by Miss Pyne, amid a hurricano of acclamation, in which, we believe, not a person in the house refused to join. Would that audiences always administered public honours upon such just and rational grounds!

(From the Morning Chronicle.)

The composer of an opera ought always to choose as the subject of its action some familiar story, real or fictitious, or some plot which shall be capable of being evolved without complication of character and construction, and therefore of being easily understood. He thus avoids inflicting needless weariness on his audience, and facilitates the reception and comprehension of his dramatic interpretation in the music. The operatic works most successful on the modern stage have all been written, intentionally or by accident, with a view to this first great want of the theatre, and hence one source of the predominating attraction in more recent times of the musical drama over its purely histrionic rival.

The plot and incidents of *King Charles II.*, an opera produced for the first time on Saturday evening, at the Princess's Theatre, are directly taken from a farce of the same name, in which Mr. Charles Kemble was the "Merry Monarch," and Mr. Fawcett was the Captain Copp.

The author's part in the affair was, on the whole, very well done—better than in many cases of much more pretension; but he might here and there have spared the affluence of his development and dialogue, to the advantage of the whole effect, by compression and concentration. But Eugene Scribes do not spring up on demand; and Mr. Desmond Ryan, A.B. (such is the romantic and imposing designation of the author), has performed his task with more than average skill and good taste.

Upon the old plot the composer has constructed a veritable Comic Opera. He has not merely written fragmentary musical illustrations, interspersed with a song here and a ballad there; but he has taken a grasp of the whole, and constructed a complete work in all its parts consistent. In fact, Mr. Macfarren has in this respect, by comparison with the majority of contemporary English composers, broken new ground; and we are much mistaken if the unequivocal success of his opera will not render its production an important era in the English musical drama.

The overture—a gay and brilliant composition, full of descriptive character—was immediately encored; and the encores of the isolated pieces were so frequent as to amount almost to a repetition of the whole opera. The finale to the first act, which is a fine piece of writing, admirably wrought up, was redemanded, as was also the finale to the opera. The most decided success of the composer, unaided by the individual talent of the chief singers, was the encore accorded to the madrigal sung by the male and female courtiers in presence of the King. This composition, a very perfect and characteristic specimen of the style, is so arranged as to allow of a fine alternation of the male and female, the tenor and the bass voices, and the effect is charmingly harmonious. The canon, sung by the Page, Fanny, and the King, is so graceful a piece of writing, and it was so well sung, that it ought also to have obtained an encore.

To Miss Louisa Pyne, who took the part of Copp's daughter Fanny, the composer is indebted for her excellent and artistic rendering of the music allotted to her, and for her unpretending, but arch and lady-like acting. We have already noticed the successful performance of this young lady in Zerlina and Amina—this new part still further tested her abilities. It is long since we have had to record a *début* so entirely satisfactory. To considerable personal attractions, and a most expressive countenance, Miss Pyne adds a charming modesty of manner, and a seeming unconsciousness of all influences but those of her duty as a performer. Her execution is extremely facile and often brilliant; occasionally, as for instance, in the *finale*, "Now with fears no more contending," triumphantly effective.

Mrs. Macfarren, the composer's wife, made her *début* on the stage as the Page. Her acting was very natural, and less constrained than might have been expected from a debutante, and her songs (which are written to exhibit the wide compass of her voice) were given with a skill commensurate with the difficulty of their execution. Mr. Harrison, as the King, was less courtly, but decidedly better looking, than his royal prototype. He has one or two ballads, of which that in the second act, "My heart to thee flies home," was sung with great tenderness and dramatic feeling. Mrs. Weiss, as the Queen, sang her music with more than ordinary correctness of intonation; and Mr. Weiss, as Copp, was very rough and sailor-like, commanding an encore for a Diddish nautical ballad, "The ship in which poor Tom was pressed."

Mr. Macfarren was called before the curtain at the close, to receive praises gallantly earned and modestly acknowledged. He was led on by Miss Pyne, and by his gestures he seemed to indicate that to her talent he was much indebted for his success. If so, he was not far wrong.

(From the Sunday Times.)

Who that remembers Covent Garden Theatre five-and-twenty years ago can forget the production there of Howard Payne's *Charles II.*, with its splendid cast, when the Merry Monarch was fittingly represented by Charles Kemble, and Fawcett has never since been equalled as Captain Copp, the bluff, sturdy landlord of the King's Head, at Wapping; when Jones played Rochester like a gentleman and a courtier, and Miss Maria Tree captivated all hearts in the character of Mary Copp. The comedy itself has survived myriads of its ephemeral successors, and is still, in the provincial theatres, where novelty is not so imperatively demanded as in London, one of the most attractive pieces that a manager can play with a good stock company. The choice, therefore, of this little piece for a comic opera has been exceedingly judicious, and we congratulate Mr. Macfarren, the composer, on having made such good use as he has done of the materials that the plot and incidents of Howard Payne's comedy offered him. The libretto, by Mr. Desmond Ryan, is merely a lyric adaptation of the old comedy, the greater part of the dialogue being given in recitative, with the usual proportion of songs and concerted pieces. There has been no departure from the plot of the original comedy, except in the alteration of the character of Lady Clara to that of the Queen; we need not, therefore, dwell upon this portion of the opera, with which the public are already familiar, but proceed to the consideration of its merits as a musical work.

Mr. Macfarren, amongst the musical profession, has been known as a composer possessed of a thorough knowledge of his art, whose style has been formed in the best school, and whose compositions are not less remarkable for their pure classical taste than for the attractive character of their melody. With the public, however, his merit has been so little recognised as to occasion Mendelssohn, when he has last in this country, to say, in reference to Macfarren, "the best composer you have amongst you is unknown." His opera of *Charles II.* produced last night, has been a triumphant confirmation of the German composer's opinion of our young artist. As regards the completeness of the work we do not recollect anything comparable to it on the English stage for a long time; there is in it no crudeness of style—no vagueness of purpose. You perceive in every passage the mind of the master directing itself to a definite point, and achieving its object with the greatest possible ease. His efforts seem to spring spontaneously, and in no instance are our nerves disturbed by violent orchestral convulsions to conceal the

composer's meagreness of invention. Nothing, indeed, can be more perfect than Mr. Macfarren's instrumentation, which we regret to say had not the advantage of a more effective orchestra. The crowded state of our columns will not permit our entering into a detailed criticism of the opera to-night, which we hope to do next week; meanwhile we have to record its complete success. Many of the airs were rapturously encored. Amongst those that were thus complimented, was the ballad, in the first act, "She shines before me like a star," a very pleasing air, sung with great sweetness and expression by Madame Macfarren. Miss Pyne, whose popularity seems rapidly and deservedly on the increase, obtained a rapturous encore in the song "Hope and fear alternate vieing." Her duet with Mrs. Macfarren, "O! blest are young hearts," an exceedingly pretty air, and very sweetly sung, was also re-demanded. Miss Pyne was also encored in the beautiful cavatina "Canst thou deem my heart is changing?" which she gave with delicious purity and freshness. The romance "A poor simple maiden I," is, perhaps, the air in the opera which will become most popular; it is a charming composition, and was executed with infinite grace and natural simplicity by Miss Pyne, who obtained an enthusiastic encore. Mr. Harrison, who represented the Merry Monarch, had little of the gay or graceful Charles in his appearance; we fancied he seemed more at his ease in the "King's Head," at Wapping, than in the King's Palace at Whitehall. His first song, "Hail, all hail to pleasure," full of variety and joyous spirit, was destroyed by the inexpressive manner in which he gave it. He was encored, after a stout but ineffectual opposition, in the song, "Here's to the maid." An attempt was made to procure a repetition of the most insipid ballad in the opera, "My heart to thee flies home," which we were glad to find the audience resisted. Madame Macfarren made her first appearance on the stage in the character of Julian, the Page. Her voice is a mezzo soprano of moderate compass; the quality in the middle and lower notes is good, and though her power is not great, she sings with remarkable sweetness and expression. Though a novice to the stage, she played with great intelligence and dramatic propriety; she has, however, still much to learn in this part of her profession. Mr. Weiss's Captain Copp was a creditable performance; he sang the music allotted to him with excellent effect, but we cannot say we liked the sea-song, "Nan of Battersea," in which he was, notwithstanding, encored. Mr. Corri's Rochester deserves to be favorably mentioned—musically and dramatically, it was a very creditable performance. In noticing the successful pieces of the opera, we should not omit the following madrigal, sung in the banquetting chambers, at Whitehall, by the company, in the presence of the King and Queen.

MADRIGAL.

"Maidens, would ye 'scape undoing,
Never, never go a-woing!
I saw young love the other day
Hide in a thicket lurkingly,
And when a fair maid pass'd that way
At her his arrows he did fly.
Now in solitude she pineth,
And her former joy declineth—
Maidens would ye 'scape undoing,
Never, never go a-woing!"

It is a truly beautiful composition, in the fine old English style of these once highly-esteemed pieces of chamber music. The audience applauded it to the echo, and encored it by acclamation. We have but to add, that the opera was mounted with taste and care, and that at the conclusion all the principals were called for; after which there was a vociferous call for Mr. Macfarren, who appeared before the curtain amidst the tumultuous cheering of the house.

Thus all the critics have agreed as to the merits of the music, the excellence of the general performance, and the triumphant success achieved.

Of the *début* of Madame Macfarren the general opinion likewise seems to be that it was highly and deservedly successful. To so much evidence we can superadd the weight of our individual testimony, vouching for the undeniable success of the

fair artist. Madame Macfarren has a pure contralto voice of considerable power and compass, and capable of great dramatic feeling and expression. The low notes are strong, round, and resonant; the middle, sweet and touching; while the high notes partake somewhat of the character of the *mezzo-soprano*. Flexibility also attaches to Madame Macfarren's voice in no small degree, as was abundantly testified in the cavatina in the second act. The great hits of the fair artist were in Julian's first ballad, "She shines before me like a star," which was rendered with infinite taste and expression, and the recitative, "O cruel fortune," in the second act, which exhibited first-rate powers of declamation. She also sang beautifully in the duet with Fanny in the first act. In short, no more successful *début* could be desired for Madame Macfarren, and we feel assured that with study and determination to do, for she is a novice on the stage, she will far surpass her efforts of Saturday last, remarkable as they undoubtedly were in a first performance.

We have so much to say of Miss Louisa Pyne, whose exquisitely graceful singing, and charming modest deportment, so necessary to the part assumed, tended largely to the success of the opera, that we will be pardoned if, at present, in our necessarily circumscribed limits, we are compelled to dismiss her with one simple expression of high admiration for all her efforts.

The general performance is admirable, and reflects infinite credit on all concerned therein. The band and chorus, under Mr. Loder's zealous training and direction, exert themselves in the most praiseworthy manner, and effect wonders. The finale to the first act is splendidly sung, and constitutes as complete a piece of *ensemble* singing as we have heard out of Covent Garden for a long time. No less excellent is the sestet and chorus in the second act, and the madrigal, which creates a *furore* nightly.

The scenery is exceedingly beautiful and striking. The first scene, the Queen's *boudoir*, is a fac-simile of one of the royal receiving-rooms at Whitehall, as is the last scene of the banquetting-room at the same palace. Mr. Maddox, who was bent on achieving something out of the common, obtained permission for his scene-painter to make the copy. This last scene is gorgeous and magnificent, and in its details is singularly appropriate. The whole furnishing of the scene, with its printed tapestries, green velvet and gold chairs and seats, and the gorgeous dresses of the royal attendants and Yeomen of the Guard, must have cost the manager a considerable sum. All the dresses and appointments are new; and when it is considered that upwards of sixty persons are employed in the opera, one way or another, a fair notion may be entertained of the expenses incurred. Indeed, nothing has been spared to give due effect to the piece, and the stage-mounting, as every body knows, adds in no small degree to the effect even of a musical representation.

The dances, under the supervision of Mr. Flexmore, are capitally managed; but further particulars must be reserved to our ensuing number, our notice having already run out to an unusual length. Many things we would wish to notice must be deferred until next week.

WHITTINGTON CLUB.

An evening concert of a very attractive character was given at the Whittington Club Rooms, or Metropolitan Athenæum, as it is newly called, on Monday last. On this occasion the muster of artists, vocal and instrumental, was strong, and comprised, in the former section, the Misses A. and M. Williams, Pyne, and Messent; and the Messrs. Leffler, Land,

Herberte, and Frank Bodda; and in the latter, Kate Loder and Mr. F. B. Jewson (pianists), Mr. Richardson (flute), and Mr. Lazarus (clarinet).

The vocal entertainment, with few exceptions, consisted of English pieces. Miss Messent was encored twice in her solos, in Vincent Wallace's ballad, "Why do I weep for thee?" and in a MS. romanza by Land, called "Queen of the Fays," a composition of much merit. The fair vocalist was also encored, with Miss Pyne, in Glover's duet, "From our merry Swiss home." All three encores were well deserved. Encores were likewise awarded to Mr. Herberte, in "My pretty Jane;" to Miss M. Williams, in Purcell's "Haleyon Days;" and to Richardson in a flute solo.

Mr. F. B. Jewson played a rhapsody, with variations, of his own composition, in capital style. The rhapsody is well worthy of a second hearing. Mr. Jewson was liberally and heartily applauded.

Mr. Richardson and Mr. Lazarus greatly delighted their auditors in Bishop's "Lo! here the gentle lark," arranged for flute and clarinet, the last-named instrument, as a matter of course, doing the voice part. This was very effective. Lazarus's tone is exquisitely pure and true, and if any wind instrument could be made to realize the human voice, it would be Lazarus's clarinet played by Lazarus himself. Richardson played the flute obligato in brilliant style.

The event of the evening was Kate Loder's solo on the pianoforte. She selected Thalberg's fantasia on airs from *Sonnambula*, one of the most difficult of the great pianist's compositions. We never heard this admirable artiste play more splendidly, or with more brilliant effect. Indeed, it appeared to us several times during the performance, that the performer had acquired more digital force than ever, while her facility, dexterity, and delicacy were as conspicuous as ever. In this last quality we never heard any pianist who surpassed Kate Loder. Delicacy and grace—an especial delicacy and grace—are paramount in all her efforts, and while others may compete with, or even surpass her in mere mechanism, or animal power, she is unequalled in these attributes, which proclaim intelligence and feminine feeling. Kate Loder also joined Mr. Richardson in a duet concertante for the flute and piano.

Messrs. F. B. Jewson and E. Land were the conductors.

The concert went off in a satisfactory manner.

ALBONI.

(From the New York Message-Bird.)

FABLE is as ready to amuse herself with the early history of an operatic singer as she is with that of a hero, and to the full as apt to throw as few somersaults across the direct course of the trustworthy chronicles that contain the first notes of a chorograph's career, as she would be to try her agility on the facts that prelude the maturer, and more veracious period of a conqueror's. Such being the case, we know not how or where to begin with Alboni. Whether we are to take her as a child in the cottage, amid the vine-bearing elms starred with the clusters of the ripening grapes, where one report places her youth, or in the memory where another of equal veracity authorizes us to place her; whether we are to take her as a juvenile mountebank, cutting capers and singing scraps of music in the country fairs of Italy, or as a conscientious pupil, studying and working her way to eminence by that toil which, in nine cases out of ten, must go hand in hand with genius.

The truth is, that while we know Alboni we never had the

curiosity—perhaps it might be better named the impertinence—to inquire personally into her early history, and now that we would write of her, cannot, with anything like truth, enter into an earlier period of it than that in which she commenced to take her position on the Italian stage in public estimation.

At the commencement of the summer of 1846, we were at Dresden—Gutzhoff had just produced his drama of *Uriel Costa*, which had met with great success there. Criticism had slackened in its efforts to overvalue or depreciate it, when the name of Alboni began to be talked of. Her portrait made its appearance in the windows of the print-sellers. She was a new Italian artist—quite new. Nobody had heard of her. She was to appear in the *Barbiere*. Now there was something very prepossessing in the portrait. It was that of a large, smiling, handsome, and good-humoured Italian—but the critical world of Dresden went to bed without having its rest disturbed by dreams of her talent or doubts of her birth. Whether she was Neapolitan, Tuscan, or Roman, mattered nothing to it. It slept soundly.

The first night, or rather the first evening of her appearance—for it was, as we previously said, but the commencement of summer—came. The opera selected by the vocalist was the *Barbiere*. We, like the greater portion of the literary and artistic world of Dresden, preferred the open air, and passed the evening with Geibel and some others in the gardens beyond the city. A cup of coffee, some cigars, and conversation, more than recompensing us, as we supposed, for our absence from the theatre. We were, however, in error, for we heard the next morning that Madlle. Alboni had made a tremendous hit, and that she was well worth hearing. Her success had been a decided one, and that in spite of a more than usually scanty audience. The case was now changed. Hear her we must. The *Barbiere* was announced for repetition. We secured places early, and went to the theatre—being very well roasted by a scorching day—prepared to be both critical and savage. Tsitsatheck was the *tenore*, and although clever, was somewhat a coarse representative of the hero. Of the others nothing need be said; they were of average European merit, and not to be named by those who remember the troupes of Paris, London, and St. Petersburg. When the opera was ended, we doubted whether we were convinced that Alboni was a contralto, so completely had she carried us away with her singing. We forget now what air she introduced at the piano in her music lesson, but it was one that suited her voice, and was deliciously sung; it was encored twice—an unusual exhibition of enthusiasm on the part of a German audience. The theatre was crowded to suffocation—in Dresden a rare occurrence—and she had a complete and thorough triumph. The next night she sung, the *Cenerentola* was given, and we need scarcely say, that in spite of the temptations of fresh air, and our evening coffee, we were there. In this opera her success was so great and unmistakable, that we felt a new star had arisen in the musical world. Suffice it, that every night she played in Dresden, we were at the theatre, and that when she went she left us in the conviction that her voice and talent were absolute necessities on the Italian stage at London and Paris.

It was, however, then doubtful if she could get there. Lumley and Vatel were the two directors, and the old *troupe*, with the exception of Tamburini, filled every position. Luckily for Alboni, a revolution in the affairs of the Italian theatre had arrived, and Beale and Costa organized a second opera for the London season. Covent Garden was renewed, Grisi and Mario had revolted, Lumley was scouring the continent for a new *troupe*, and there was a chance for Alboni

She was engaged by Beale, and on low terms, for she was yet unknown to the London public. How should she have been otherwise, for nineteen summers had barely ripened her voice into its perfection. Her voice had been singularly sweet and sonorous in the small theatre of Dresden, but would it have power enough to fill a large theatre? This was yet to be tried. The evening came, and saw that the theatre was full, with the same absence of expectation that had attended her previous *début* at Dresden. But here she had a part that suited her natural voice, and the orchestra and chorus were the finest in the world. The audience were moved into absolute enthusiasm, and Alboni took her rank, at the age of nineteen, beside Grisi. The mere girl in years had achieved one of the proudest positions on the lyric stage, and when the season ended, had a name accepted in the musical history of the European drama. Then came the second season, with every critic awakened by the recess from the stupor into which he had been lulled by the wonders of her vocalization.

But now came the period in which Alboni was to experience the kindness of managers. Beale had resigned the responsibilities of his office to Mr. Delafield, and one of the principal sufferers, or, at least, one of the first sufferers from the exchange, was Alboni. The management pretended to treat with her until late in the winter, and then broke off, having formed an engagement with a *contralto*, new to the English stage, and more manageable, if not so fair and richly-gifted an *artiste* as Alboni. Paying, however, but little attention to this, she was at work on her reputation. The management of the French Opera engaged her for a limited number of nights. Here was a second ordeal for her to go through, as formidable as had been her *début* on the London boards. At the *Académie*, for it was at this theatre, and not at the Italian, her first appearance in Paris took place,* she had, however, a crowded audience to appeal to. Every musical and critical pair of ears in Paris made a point of being there—doubly critical, and we had almost said musical—because they had to sit in judgment on an Italian with an English reputation. Need we say that Alboni was triumphantly successful. She did not, however, stay on the French boards, where she could only appear as a concert singer. Vatel was displaced from the management of the Italian, and Ronconi became the temporary lessee. Alboni was engaged, and at the same time Lumley offered her a position for the season of the present year at Her Majesty's theatre, which she accepted.

It would, however, be useless to follow her through the intrigue of the engagement, and trace the attempt made by Lumley to tie her down to the fortune of his theatre for three years. This, Alboni steadily refused, and the result has been the engagement of the Countess of Rossi—Madame Sontag—in her place.

That Madlle. Alboni is a great *artiste* no doubt can now exist; and that she is one of the most amiable and simple-hearted *artistes* who ever trod the boards of a theatre, few who know her would for a moment doubt. With all her genius, she is but a good-hearted child in manners and bearing, open-hearted, affectionate, and generous to an excess few who do not know her would give even an Italian credit for. Her career is but begun; let us hope that it may be to the full as brilliant and as lengthy a one as that of any of the children of Italian song who have preceded her on the French and English stage. She has everything before her; with health

and genius, her position, an already ascertained one, and barely a score of years taled off against her by that great consumer of all things—Time—what is there to which she cannot pretend that lies within the scope of her talents and her sex? Nothing!

PROVINCIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA AT LIVERPOOL.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE Liverpool Philharmonic Society gave a full-dress concert, the first since their opening festival, at their new hall on Tuesday evening last; the company, as usual, comprising the *élite* of the neighbourhood, and the spacious hall, despite the inclemency of the weather, was perhaps better filled than upon any former occasion.

The programme was meagre, and held out but faint hopes of more than ordinary enjoyment, and consequently we had made up our minds to be satisfied.

Zauberflöte was the opening overture, but it was not played in the same style that we have hitherto heard the instrumental performances given by this society; the stringed instruments in particular wanted their usual precision, and gave evidence of a lack of practice together; indeed, the band altogether, with such an energetic conductor as Mr. T. Z. Herrmann, are certainly far below what the subscribers have a right to expect, and they would derive very considerable advantage from a closer attention to the *baton* of their conductor.

Festa's madrigal, "Down in a flowery vale," by the chorus of the society, followed; and it is only just to this body of amateurs to say that in this madrigal, and particularly in the chorus from *William Tell*, "Glory to our Father-land" they acquitted themselves in such style that left the impression that as a chorus they are certainly not out-done by any body of amateurs in the country. There is all that the author would wish to paint in his composition, due respect being paid to light and shade, and altogether their efforts seem so natural and easy, that we set them down as a pattern to the generality of chorus singers.

Miss Catherine Hayes was introduced in Bellini's charming "Come per me sereno," and never did we hear this lady to so great advantage as on this occasion. Both in this and in Donizetti's morceau "O luce di quest' anima," in which she was deservedly encored, she acquitted herself with more than usual effect; and such was her rendering of the music assigned to her, that the whole of the audience were delighted, and she fully sustained the reputation she had previously earned with them. She is a general favorite, and the more we hear her, the more we like her.

Miss Poole was at home in Benedict's song, "By the sad sea waves," the author accompanying her. Bishop's duet, "Meet again," by Misses Hayes and Poole, was a rich treat, and merited an encore. MM. Damke and Burdini disappointed us, and it was perhaps as well that they had not more to do.

With the exceptions we have named, the concert was rather a tame one, and below what we have a right to look for from the Liverpool Philharmonic Society. It did not show good judgment to wind up with "Hark! 'tis the Indian Drum," by the whole of the vocal talent, and we hope the committee will not make such a mistake again.

We are glad that the prices on this occasion were more moderate, thus putting it within reach of all parties to share in such entertainments.

In conclusion, we congratulate the society on their position, and are glad to see them encouraging native talent.

* The writer is in error. Alboni appeared at the *Italiens* as Arsace, in *Semiramide*. She was offered an engagement at the *Académie*, but always declined it.—Ed.

One word to the band ; we have noticed before, and the fault still remains, that each one seems determined to play as loud as he can, and it frequently happens that the voice is drowned by their exertions. The band has always been too loud, and particularly in piano passages—in which they would do well to take a hint from the chorus of the society.

The Keans have been playing at the Theatre Royal during the week, in the *Wife's Secret*, *Strathmore*, and their other favourite pieces. Mrs. Charles Kean's beautiful acting has, as usual, excited the admiration of the audiences ; but more of this next week.

The Ransford family gave their musical entertainments this week at the Concert Hall. Miss Ransford is a well-established favourite at this place of amusement, and her father and brother, who take the bass and tenor parts, are respectable singers. The elder Mr. Ransford made himself "at home" in the humorous vein.

The Philharmonic Society is about to give a performance of vocal and instrumental music under the designation of a "Soiree Musicale." The object is to afford amateurs on the pianoforte an opportunity of hearing the performance of compositions of various styles, both ancient and modern, in those pieces which come under the denomination of chamber music. The programme is of the most *recherché* character. The practice at Willis's Room, and other celebrated places of metropolitan esteem, has formed the basis of the arrangement for the impending soiree ; and, whilst the instrumental performers are eminent for ability, several new compositions will be performed, including a quatuor by Mendelssohn, for the pianoforte, violin, viola, and violoncello. Madame Duleken, M. de Kontski, Madlle. Schloss, and several other popular artistes are, I believe, engaged.

Mr. Joseph Scates gave a Concertina Soiree at the Royal Assembly Rooms on Thursday evening last, the room was well and fashionably attended. The chief feature of the evening was the overtures to *Semiramide*, and *Zampa*, on four concertinas, two trebles, tenor, and bass, by J. Scates, Mrs. J. Scates, G. H. Lake, and J. Case, also a quartette on airs, from *La Figlia del Regimento*, which was encored. In the course of the evening Mr. Scates played a solo on airs from *Linda di Chamouni*, a duett for two treble concertinas with Mrs. Scates, on airs from *Norma*, also a duett for treble and bass with J. Case, on airs from *I Puritani*, each of which was applauded. Mons. Welhi astonished the audience with his performance on the pianoforte. He played a fantasia on airs from *Maritana*, and being encored he gave "God save the Queen," with variations for the left hand only. The vocalists were Miss Cubitt, from London ; Miss Whitnall ; Miss Stewart, from London ; Mr. Geo. Buckland, and Mr. Robinson. Miss Cubitt sang "Se m' Abbandoni," and a ballad, "I would not if I could forget," and on being encored, she substituted "John Anderson my Joe," which delighted the audience. Miss Whitnall sang "Think of me," with an obligato accompaniment for the concertina, and was encored in the Scotch ballad, "Sandy and Jenny." Miss Stewart sang "Ocean, thou mighty monster" and "I'm a merry Zingara," a duett with Miss Cubitt, "Merry Bells," and G. H. Lake's "Spirit Song," with Miss Cubitt and Geo. Buckland. Mr. Robinson sang "Or che in cielo." Mr. G. Buckland was encored in "Philip the Falconer," and an extravaganza, "Jack and the Bean Stalk," when he substituted "Robinson Crusoe," and "Sally Shalley," for which he received great applause.

J. H. N.

13th Oct., 1849.

MUSIC AT NORWICH.

(From a Correspondent.)

SCARCELY had the lofty strains of Handel's "Judas Maccabæus" ceased to vibrate in the ears of our fellow citizens, than their appetite for music (well known to be voracious) was excited by a treat of a different order. Its leading feature was the first appearance here of the far-famed Madame Sontag, which had been postponed in consequence of the severe loss that Norwich has recently sustained. This great attraction, together with that of Thalberg, the Briareus of pianoforte players, filled the reserved seats of St. Andrew's Hall, on Monday evening, with an unusually fashionable audience, drawn, not only from the city, but from all parts of the county.

Of Madame Sontag it is impossible to speak otherwise than in terms of encomium. This lady's intonation, scaling, execution, and expression, all denote the great artiste. Her voice, though severely tasked by encores, preserved its freshness to the last note. As examples of the scope of her powers, we may quote the variations to Rode's air, and Bishop's "Home, sweet Home." Nothing can be more opposite than the styles of these two compositions, yet Madame Sontag was equally great in both. In the former she revelled through a couple of octaves with the utmost facility, grace, and precision. In the latter she exhibited sweetness of tone and a melting pathos that went at once to the heart. We hold with Dr. Beattie, that "a fine female voice, modulated by sensibility, is the sweetest sound in art or nature." Madame Sontag had already been heard in music as good, sung, too, as finely ; but this air produced the most rapturous applause. Why ? Because the whole audience understood the language, and felt that "the sound was an echo to the sense."

The efforts of the other vocalists confirmed us in the opinions we have already expressed, and which need not be repeated.

Mons. Thalberg developed all the high qualities we have attempted to describe, in his "New Tarantella," and especially in the airs "Deh vieni alla finestra," and "Meco tu dei ballari," from *Il Don Giovanni*.

THE ALFRED JUBILEE.

WEDNESDAY, the 25th day of October, in the year of grace 1849, was a grand day for the folk of Wantage. It may not be generally remembered that that town is the birthplace of our good old Saxon King Alfred ; or that the day above written is the 1000th anniversary of the birthday of that monarch. This being the case, it was resolved, by a body of gentlemen—cultivators of Anglo-Saxon literature, and proud of their Anglo-Saxon race—to celebrate the auspicious occasion by a festival or jubilee. Accordingly, a committee was formed, and the necessary steps taken. Yesterday the town presented, as if by magic, all the appearance of a holiday. The shops were closed, except hotels and refreshment houses. The streets were decorated with banners bearing appropriate inscriptions ; over the approaches were spanned triumphal arches of boughs and flowers ; and, at an early hour, crowds of all ranks thronged towards the market-place by every sort of conveyance, natural and artificial. Divine service was performed at 11 o'clock in the church, and shortly afterwards, at the Town Hall, an address or lecture was delivered by Major Bell, upon the history and traditions of King Alfred, with an eulogy upon his character. The Rev. Mr. C. L. Richmond, who had come from America to attend this Anglo-Saxon jubilee, also made an eloquent and energetic speech to the crowd

assembled outside. After this a procession, consisting of the clubs and the guests, visited King Alfred's Well, about a quarter of a mile off, and supposed to be on the site of the ancient stronghold or castle of the West Saxon Kings. Here an address was delivered by the Rev. F. Revroux upon the life and character of King Alfred. Meanwhile, on the common, a little outside the town, a magnificent ox was slowly and majestically turning upon an iron crate, worked by a steam-engine, before a huge fire, contained in a convenient brick receptacle built for the purpose. Another old English custom was revived in the greased May-pole, which, surmounted by a leg of mutton, the prize of the adventurous climber, towered high in the centre of the market-place. At two o'clock a distribution of meat was made in the Market-house to the poor; and half an hour afterwards 100 impressions of the medal which had been struck upon the occasion were thrown among the people. The appearance of the town during all these proceedings was most lively and exhilarating; and it was as favourable a specimen as was ever seen of hearty English merriment and joyous excitement without license or outrage.

At three o'clock the guests assembled to dinner in the large room of the Alfred's Head Inn, Mr. C. Eyston, of Hendred House, occupying the chair. Among the company present we observed Mr. P. Pusey, M.P.; Sir Robert Throckmorton, of Buckland Park; Mr. Temple Bowdoin, Faringdon House; Mr. E. M. Atkins; Mr. W. Goodwin, of Letcombe Regis; the Rev. Dr. Whittingham, of Childrey; Mr. J. Britton, the celebrated antiquarian; Dr. Waddilove; Mr. W. J. Evelyn, M.P. for Surrey; Mr. Martin J. Tupper, the popular author of *Proverbial Philosophy*. Several members of the Pulford, the Brereton, the Tuffnell, and the Whitaker families were present, and the Rev. C. L. Richmond, from the United States, sat opposite the chairman. The room was handsomely decorated with streamers and banners, amongst which were conspicuous the stars and stripes of America in friendly union with our own national emblems. The demand for dinner tickets was very great. A great number of ladies dined, which of course greatly added to the attraction.

The Chairman gave "Her Majesty's health, as the successor to the throne and virtues of King Alfred," and the toast was received with prolonged cheering.

The other loyal toasts were then given, and during the intervals a most pleasurable interest was excited by the production of an extraordinary relic of antiquity, which Mr. Pusey had kindly permitted to be used upon an occasion so apposite. It was the "Pusey horn," fashioned into a stoup or drinking cup, presented by King Canute to the ancestors of Mr. Pusey. It is in fact the original tenure of the Pusey property, and is inalienable from it. This precious heirloom was produced, as Mr. Pusey informed the company, in a law court, as evidence in a suit, and the court so decided that it was inalienable.

Dr. Giles, the secretary, by whose exertions, coupled with those of Mr. Martin Tupper, the jubilee was mainly got up, proposed the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:—

"1. That the old Grammar School of Wantage be revived and enlarged, under the name of King Alfred's College, and that a mechanics' institute be opened with it in this town.

"2. That for the purpose of accomplishing this good work, a general subscription list be opened immediately, to which all of the Anglo-Saxon race who reverence the name and memory of Alfred are invited to contribute.

"3. That for the purpose of aiding the subscription, and at the same time of furnishing subscribers with a record of the Great Alfred, and of

this his jubilee year, an edition of his works, in one volume folio, splendidly illustrated, be immediately undertaken by competent Anglo-Saxon scholars, to be called the 'Jubilee edition of the Works of King Alfred the Great.'

"4. That every subscriber of three guineas and upwards be presented with a copy of the above-named work.

"5. That the governors of the town-lands being, by virtue of their office, guardians of the old Wantage Grammar-school, be requested to become members of this committee, and that the committee be empowered to add to their numbers."

The Chairman, in putting the question, eulogised the character of King Alfred as a scholar, as well as a monarch; and after briefly adverting to his literary works and the translations he had made, observed that in no more appropriate way could they do honour to the memory of Alfred than by promoting the cause of education and knowledge.

Mr. Tupper, in proposing the toast, "The Anglo-Saxon all over the world," observed that the feeling which had dictated this movement was rapidly spreading, not only in this country but in India and America, and wherever Anglo-Saxons were to be found. In Liverpool and London there would shortly be meetings with the same views and objects.

The Rev. C. L. Richmond also addressed the company, assuring them of the fraternal sympathies of his countrymen; and he read letters from Mr. Abbot Lawrence, the newly arrived Minister of the United States, and also from Colonel T. Aspinall, for thirty years Consul in London from the United States, both expressing their sympathy with the objects of the jubilee, their desire to forward a design for promoting unanimity between Anglo-Saxons all over the world, and their regret at not being able to be present at the festival.

A great many original songs were sung and verses recited during the day.

When the time approached at which the last up-train would leave Faringdon-road station, those of the guests who were bound for London departed, but local residents appeared disposed to somewhat prolong their festivities. And so ended the great gala day of Wantage.

DRURY LANE.

M. JULLIEN'S CONCERTS.

JULLIEN has returned to the scene of his triumphs. Drury Lane opened last evening with the first of his annual series of musical entertainments. The theatre has undergone some alterations in reference to the convenience of the perambulators. The reading-room is enlarged, and the confection room considerably improved. The decorations and illuminations are as gorgeous and brilliant as ever.

As far as we are concerned, we are sorry that Jullien commences his concerts on a Friday. We are thus precluded from entering into details of the performance, as our paper goes to press early on Saturday morning. Our readers must, therefore, rest content with a very cursory notice.

The entertainments opened with the overture to *Masaniello*, followed by a quadrille founded on airs from the same opera. Of the other performance of the first part, we can only select the *allegro* and "Storm" from Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony," which was finely played; Jetty Treffz, "Batti Batti," and a new quadrille taken from the *Prophète*.

Jetty Treffz was received with loud and prolonged cheers. The audience recognised a welcome and honoured favourite, and treated her accordingly. Her charming and plaintive singing of Mozart's exquisite song won an enthusiastic encore. The delightful artist also obtained an encore in her popular ballad, "Altes Liebeslied," which she gave with infinite point and vivacity. Jetty Treffz is engaged by Jullien for all the performances. Need we say, the enterprising conductor could have made no happier choice than in retaining the services of so accomplished a singer, and one who stands in such high favour with the public.

The National Anthem was performed, with immense effect, between the first and second parts.

In the second section, the most noticeable performance was the grand selection from the *Prophète*. Jullien, with felicitous tact, has brought in all the *morceaux* which were received with much favour at the Royal Italian Opera. The selection is good, and is capitally scored by the conductor. The audience were in raptures, and applauded every individual piece to the echo.

Solos were performed by Herr Kœnig on the cornet-à-piston, and Mr. Viotti Collins on the violin. Both were favourably received.

A *valse d'amour*, for two cornets, obtained unusual regard. It was capitally played by Herr Kœnig and Mr. Davis.

The concert terminated with Jullien's Polka from *La Figli del Reggimento*.

Jullien was hailed, on his entrance into the orchestra, with uproarious acclamations, which were continued for several minutes. The theatre was crowded in every nook and corner.

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

THE CLERGY AND CHURCH MUSIC.

To the Editor of the Musical World.

SIR,—Your correspondent "Civis" says well that clergymen are not generally qualified to undertake the office of "Vicars Choral," but I venture to differ from him as to professional men being best suited for the office, for the following reasons:—Church music should be performed or sung by educated and refined men, whose chief desire (to say nothing of interest) is to give an impressive solemnity to the words. To maintain that professional men are as zealous in religion as the clergy would be fruitless, because their vocation is as widely different as their companions, manner of living, meditations, and bias of minds. But the error is that the clergy in general set too little value upon religious music—they do not imitate King David and many of the Saints of old; no, they rather prefer to read their own long sermons than lose time in singing praises to God. They are much encouraged in this by the filthy lucre practice of advertising "popular preachers" in the daily newspapers, thus mustering together such Christians as the Bible condemns as having "itching ears." I feel assured that the clergy neglect their duty by neglecting music; it should constitute a part of their college education. Did not Martin Luther incite love and devotion among his followers by his love and zeal in music, aided by other means? Look, on the other hand, at our parochial churches. Is not the praise of God left in the hands of charity children, who are often derided because they cannot pronounce the vulgar tongue in a civil manner? The shame lies with the mock education they receive.

If singing be a worthy means of offering up our praises, ought it not to be done with all the intelligence and fervour man can devise? The influence of noble religious music is known; and the effect of poor music, poorly done, could it move a good, bad, wise, or foolish man? I therefore think that the clergy (especially now) should study the theory and practice of music and singing. It requires only attention to the production of tone, and refined tone of the mind, to make a singer. The majority of the clergy would soon qualify themselves for *vicars choral*, if they wished to improve church singing; for whatever may be the opinion of "Civis," I beg to assure him that the Rev. Dr. Wesley would sing an anthem better than many professional men; I know many clergymen, who, with study, would sing with more refined and devotional feeling than those from whose throat issues bulky sounds, yet feebly resembling adoration. Being the son of a clergyman, and having brothers, uncles, and cousins in the church, I may be supposed to be interested in all that concerns it; and should my views respecting the musical education of the clergy meet with the same encouragement that my opinions on other matters relative to church singing, especially the mode of dividing words in chanting, I shall feel honoured and glad that I have written the subject.—I am, sir, yours obliged, FRENCH FLOWERS.

3, Keppel Street, Russell Square.

P.S.—If verbal errors be printed, your readers may attribute them to the hurry of the press.

MISCELLANEOUS.

HAYMARKET.—Mr. Morris Barnett's comedy, in three acts, entitled the *Serious Family*, was produced on Tuesday evening, and met with a most brilliant and well-merited success. Want of space precludes us from giving a detailed notice, which the deserts of the work are entitled to. Next week we shall not fail to render a full account.

MR. H. C. COOPER.—(*From a Correspondent.*)—This well-known violinist is at present at Clifton, busily engaged in making arrangements for the performance of Beethoven's *Mount of Olives*, and Mendelssohn's music to *Athalie*. The choruses, which will be chiefly sustained by the Bristol Classical Harmonist Society, are already in the course of rehearsal, under the direction of Mr. P. J. Smith. The principal vocalists engaged, are Miss A. Williams, Miss M. Williams, Mrs. P. J. Smith, Mr. Lockey, and Mr. Lawler. The performance will come off about the middle of December, at the Victoria Rooms, Clifton, and will be given under influential patronage. During the temporary residence of Mr. Cooper, at Clifton, his services have been in constant requisition, and frequent musical meetings have taken place, the chief of which, have been held at the residence of G. T. Ames, Esq., a distinguished and liberal patron of music. On these occasions, the *élite* of the neighbourhood have attended by special invitation, and many of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Spohr, and other eminent composers, have been most effectively performed. It is hoped that these *Unions*, which afforded so much pleasure, and which are so well calculated to encourage a taste for music of the highest order, will be continued.

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